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March 16, 1981

Dear Senator Proxmire:

Thank you for your inquiry of February 13 transmitting Mr. Paul R. Voss's comments about Korean Presidential Chun Doo Hwan's recent visit to the United States.

Korea has been going through a difficult transitional period which had severely strained our relations. We believe, therefore, that President Chun's visit achieved its primary objective for important consultations with the new Administration which as a significant American ally. It reaffirmed the intentions of the United States to remain a [redacted] consistent friend and ally in our [redacted] and our determination to assist in [redacted] stability required in Northeast Asia if the [redacted] pursue in the region are to be achieved. [redacted] has a copy of the communique issued after the talks in Washington. You may find it a useful summary of those aspects of the talks.

We have been encouraged by the promulgation of a new Korean constitution in November, the lifting of martial law and press censorship in January, the formation of new political parties, the amnesty of 5,221 prisoners on March 2, and the Presidential elections recently completed. The inauguration of a new national assembly on March 25 will lead, we believe, to an even more active political environment.

We are pleased by the conciliatory spirit evinced in the commutation of Kim Dae Jung's sentence and the reduction of sentences given his co-defendants and are hopeful for the continuation of this spirit. We believe these steps will contribute positively to strengthening the relations between our two countries.

Sincerely,

Richard Fairbanks
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Enclosures:

1. Correspondence Returned.
2. Communique.

The Honorable
William Proxmire,
United States Senate.

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